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Auction Sale of Fifteen Landscapes

561.

By the Late

William Keith

The Personal Collection
of his son

Charles W. Keith

R. Taylor Curtis
Auctioneer

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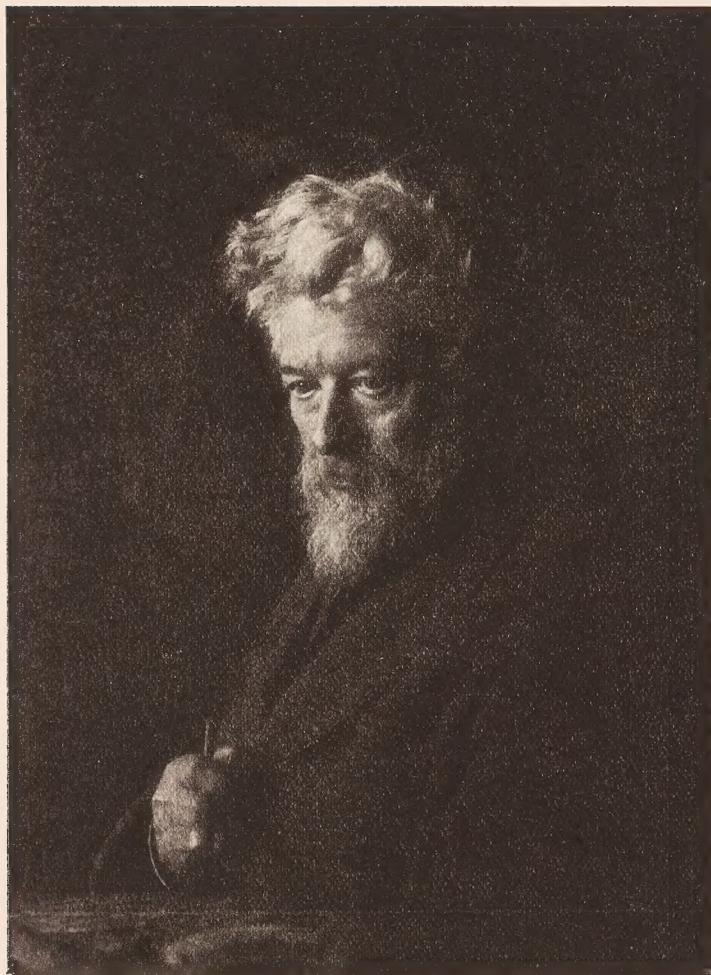
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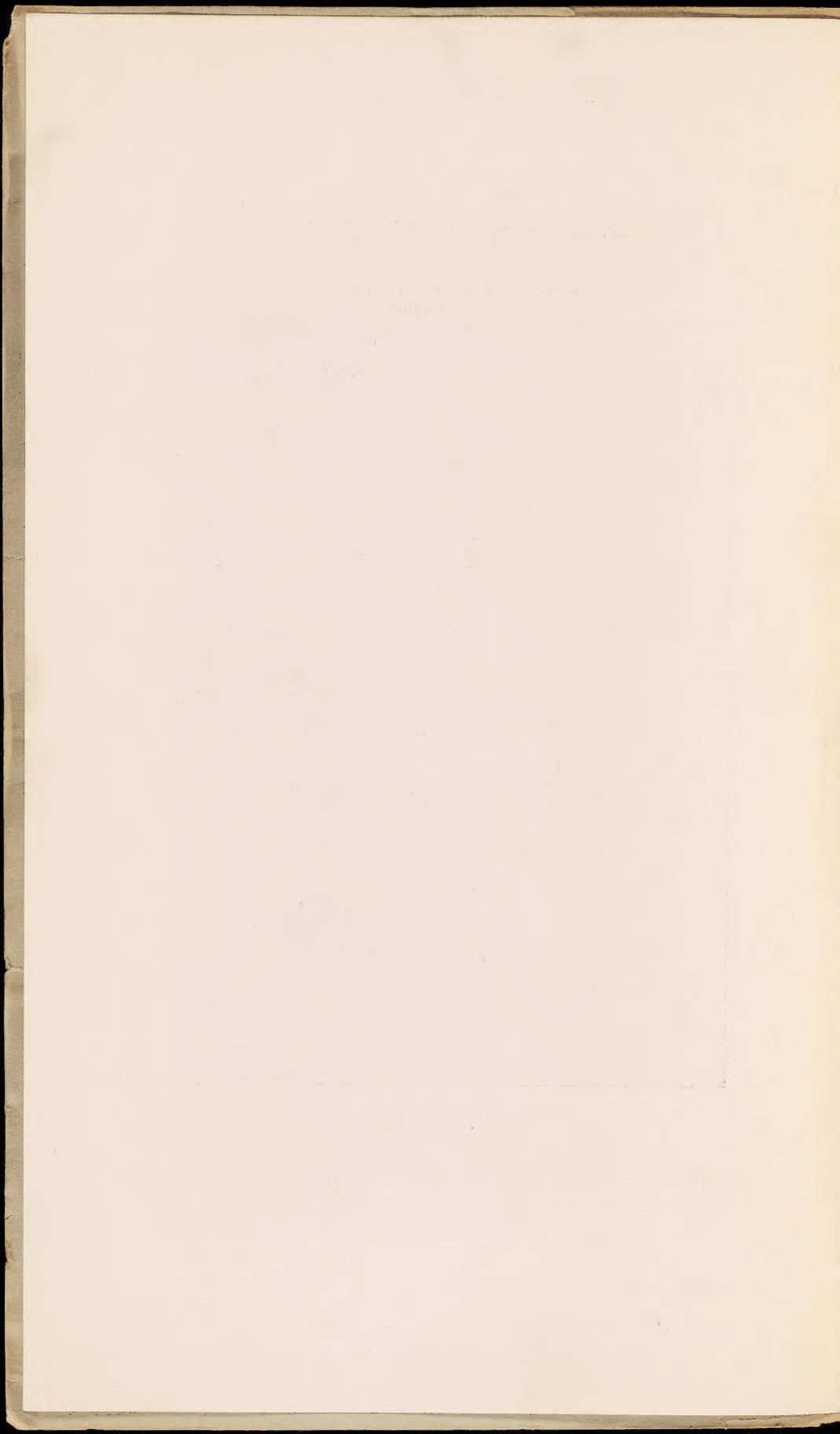
556-8 FIFTH AVE.

NEW YORK

FEB 23 1915



WM. KEITH



WILLIAM KEITH, ARTIST AND MAN

(AN EXCERPT FROM AN ARTICLE BY
R. W. MACBETH)

FEW artists have had a more interesting career than Mr. Keith. He was born in Old Meldrum, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, in November, 1839, a member of the Keith family that still owns a feudal castle in the highlands. His early boyhood was spent on this estate near Cowie, but when he was about 12 years old the family removed to New York. Here he at first had a position—much against his will, apparently—in a lawyer's office, and in his spare moments began the study of wood engraving. He soon decided to devote his entire time to his art, and after working for a year or two as an apprentice, he secured a position with Harper's Weekly and Harper's Monthly. He served these periodicals until 1859, when he went to California to live. Until the art of photo-engraving made his trade unprofitable, he was employed continually, but he soon found he could not compete with the cheaper and more rapid method of making reproductions, and began to turn his attention to outdoor work.

At first he made pencil sketches only, but gradually worked into water colors, and found such a ready sale for his sketches that in 1869 he was enabled to go abroad to study the foreign masters. For more than a year he studied in Duesseldorf, gaining valuable training in the fundamentals, and then crossed to Boston. But he continually heard the call of the

West, and so he returned to California in the seventies. Since then he has repeatedly crossed the ocean, seeing almost all of the world-famous collections, and meeting many of the leading artists of all schools, but it was California that had originally stirred him to paint, and it was to California that he returned after each trip for new inspiration.

All artists and collectors who visited the coast felt their stay incomplete without a visit to the Keith studio, and they were all cordially welcomed—when he was in the mood. George Innes lived at his studio during a rather protracted visit to the coast, and there are those who profess to see a change in Mr. Keith's work from then on. It is true that to some degree, at least, they both saw nature in the same way; but Mr. Keith saw it that way before Mr. Innes made his appearance in the West, and those who know Mr. Keith's work through its many phases, realize that it shows not a change, but a regular progression, getting more and more nearly to his ideal of what a picture should be with each succeeding year.

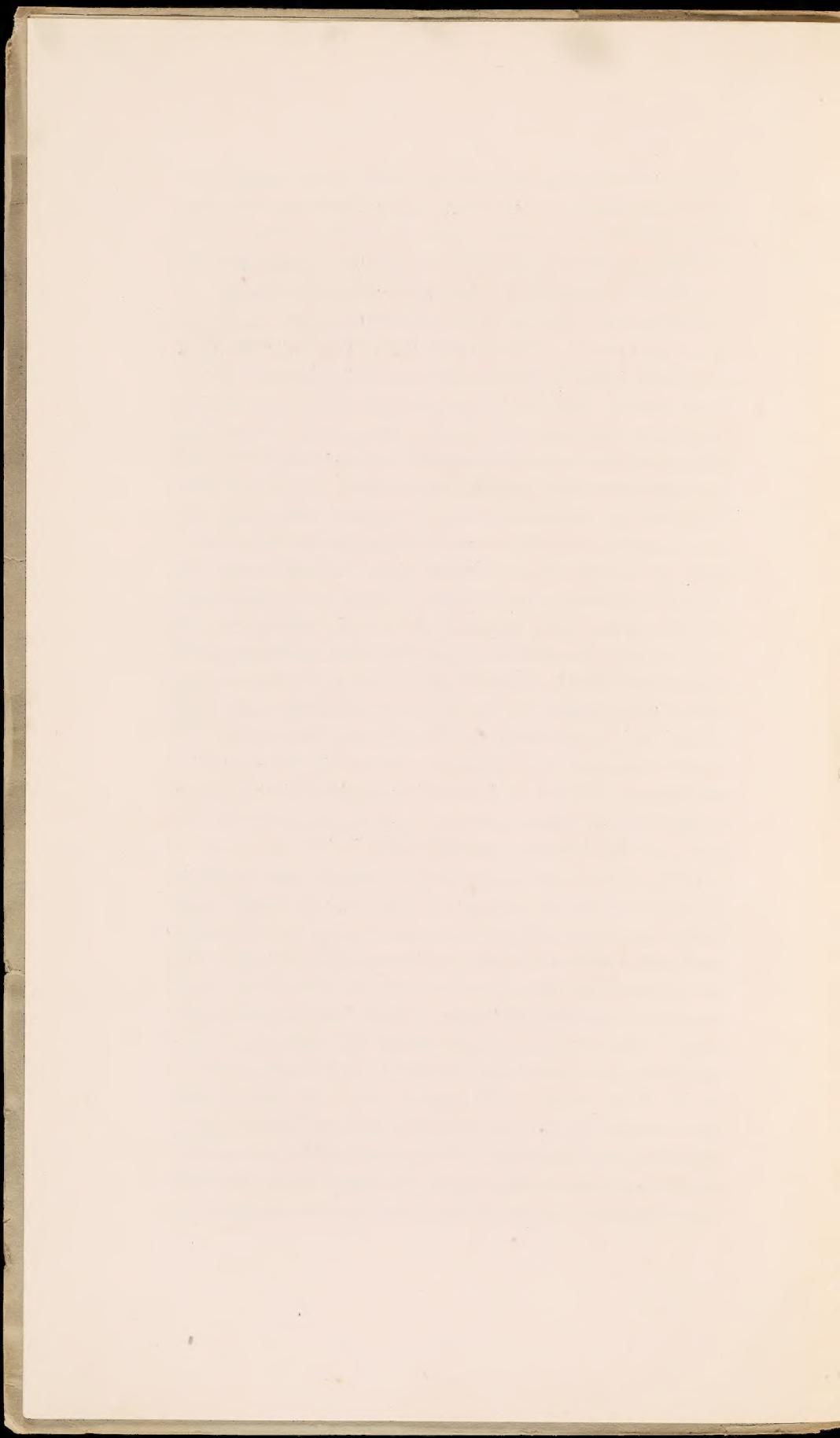
In the fire in 1906, not only was the Keith studio destroyed, but in it at the time were many of his paintings and sketches. He also lost a great number of personal gifts of his friends, and it was the loss of these that seemed to affect him most. One of his great brass bowls was rolled out into the street by some men who tried to save what they could from the flames. After the fire it was one of the first things that Mr. Keith searched for, and it was not until he had given up the search that it was discovered, blackened, but otherwise unhurt, in the middle of a street some distance from his home, where it had been abandoned.

Mr. Keith was not discouraged by the fire. He at once set about painting new canvases with a vigor and enthusiasm undaunted by nearly seventy years of constant effort, and some of the best paintings that

now represent him in private and public collections owe their being to the few years that have elapsed since 1906.

"My subjective pictures," said the artist on one occasion, "are the ones that come from the inside. I feel some emotion and I immediately paint a picture that expresses it. The sentiment is the only thing of real value in my pictures, and only a few people understand that. Suppose I want to paint something recalling meditation or repose. If people do not feel that sensation when my work is completed, they do not appreciate nor realize the picture. The fact that they like it means nothing. Anyone who can use paint and brushes can paint a true scene of nature—that is an objective picture. The artists must not depend on extraneous things. There is no reality in his art if he must depend on outside influences—it must come from within. You don't like that picture?" he asked. "Well, I don't care; it's good, anyway—it's a 'crackerjack.' You say it's irritating, and that proves it is good, because it made an impression. If it didn't arouse any feeling in you at all, it would be worthless. And, I tell you, if you had that picture around all the time, and saw it every day, you would grow to like it—you couldn't help it."

With such a philosophy it is natural that Keith's pictures are those painted in the studio, rather than in the open; but they are based on a long and intimate knowledge with the great California out-of-doors, and his subjects, in almost every case, find their groundwork in some beautiful spot not far from his Berkeley home. His mood, judged from his paintings, was variable, now quiet and dignified, and transmitted to us in those warm, soft greens, that are among the most delightful things that he ever did; and again, disturbed and turbulent, piling great white and amber clouds upon each other until his very skies reflected those emotions to which his brush gave utterance.



CATALOG
—
FIFTEEN
LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS
BY THE LATE
WILLIAM KEITH
THE PERSONAL COLLECTION
OF HIS SON
CHARLES W. KEITH
TO BE SOLD AT AUCTION
IN
THE SUTTER STREET SALESROOMS
532 and 534 SUTTER STREET
ON
THURSDAY, JANUARY 28th
AT 2:30 AFTERNOON

ON EXHIBITION FROM JANUARY 23d
UNTIL DAY OF SALE

H. TAYLOR CURTIS,

Auctioneer

1915.

San Francisco.

Conditions of Sale

- 1 The highest bidder to be the buyer, and if any dispute arises between two or more bidders, the lot in dispute shall be immediately put up again and re-sold.
- 2 The auctioneer reserves the right to reject any or all bids which are merely a nominal or fractional advance, and therefore, in his judgment, likely to affect the sale injuriously.
- 3 The purchasers to give their names and addresses, and to pay down cash deposit or the whole of the purchase money, if required, in default of which the lot or lots so purchased to be immediately put up again and re-sold.
- 4 The lots to be taken away at the buyers' expense and risk within twenty-four hours from the conclusion of the sale, unless otherwise specified by the auctioneer or managers previous to or at the time of sale, and the remainder of the purchase money to be absolutely paid, or otherwise settled for to the satisfaction of the auctioneer, on or before delivery; in default of which the undersigned will not hold himself responsible if the lots be lost, stolen, damaged, or destroyed, but they will be left at the sole risk of the purchaser.
- 5 The undersigned will not hold himself responsible for the correctness of the description, genuineness, or authenticity of, or any fault or defect, in any lot, and makes no warranty whatever.
- 6 To prevent inaccuracy in delivery, and inconvenience in the settlement of the purchases, no lot can, on any account, be removed during the sale.
- 7 Upon failure to comply with the above conditions, the money deposited in part payment shall be forfeited; all lots unclaimed within one day from the conclusion of sale (unless otherwise specified as above) shall be re-sold by public or private sale without further notice, and the deficiency (if any) attending such re-sale shall be made good by the defaulter at this sale, together with all charges attending the same. This condition is without prejudice to the right of the auctioneer to enforce the contract made at this sale without such re-sale, if he thinks fit.

H. TAYLOR CURTIS,
Auctioneer.

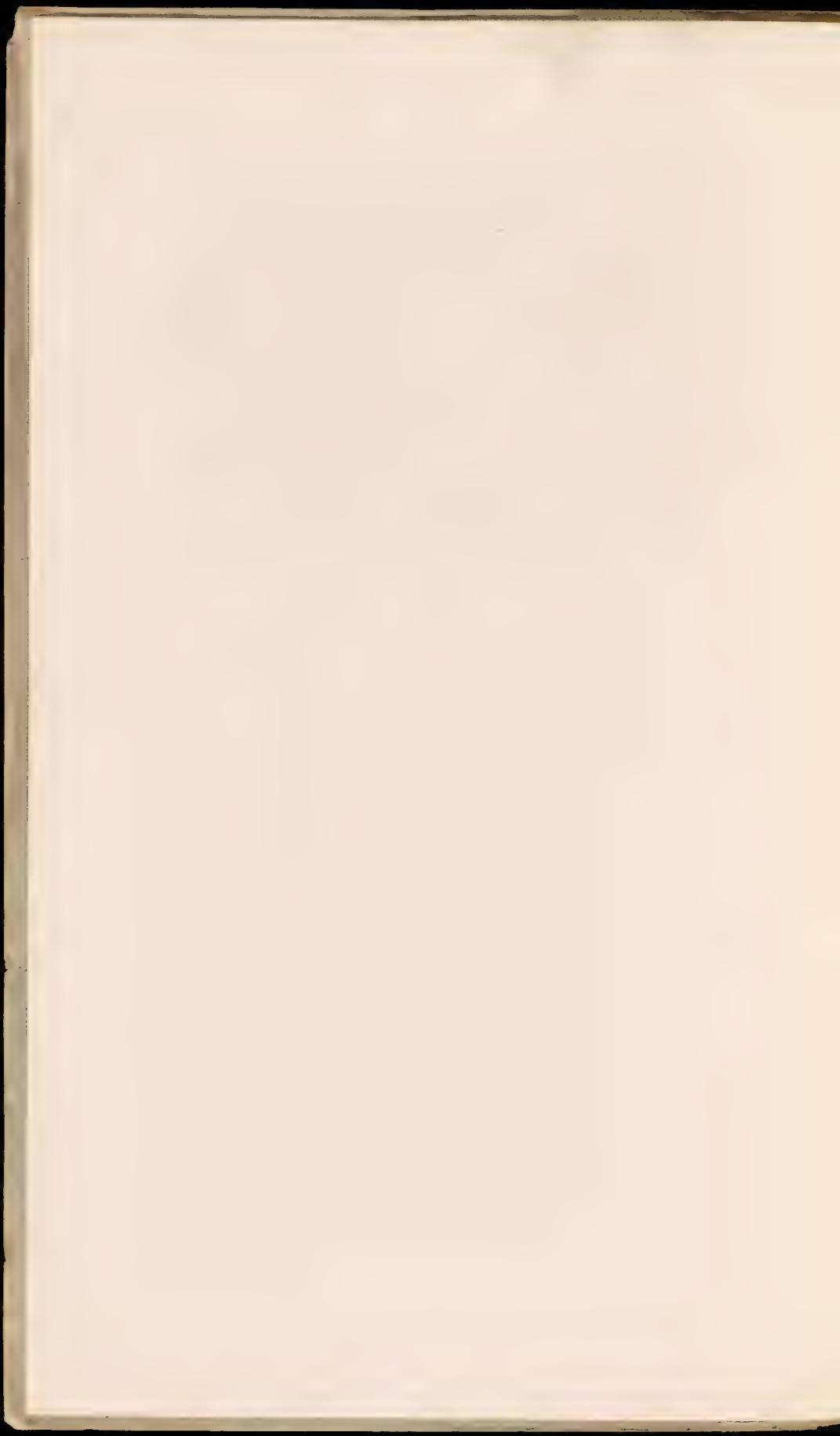


1—AUTUMN DAY

SET in the midst of a quiet dell is a little woodland pool, its transparent waters reflecting the graceful grasses which hem it in. Noonday floods this peaceful forest in a halo of light, intensifying the autumn shades of foliage and grass.

A group of figures standing at the edge of the pool, all apparently enthralled by the beauty of the surroundings.

Height 16, length 24 inches.

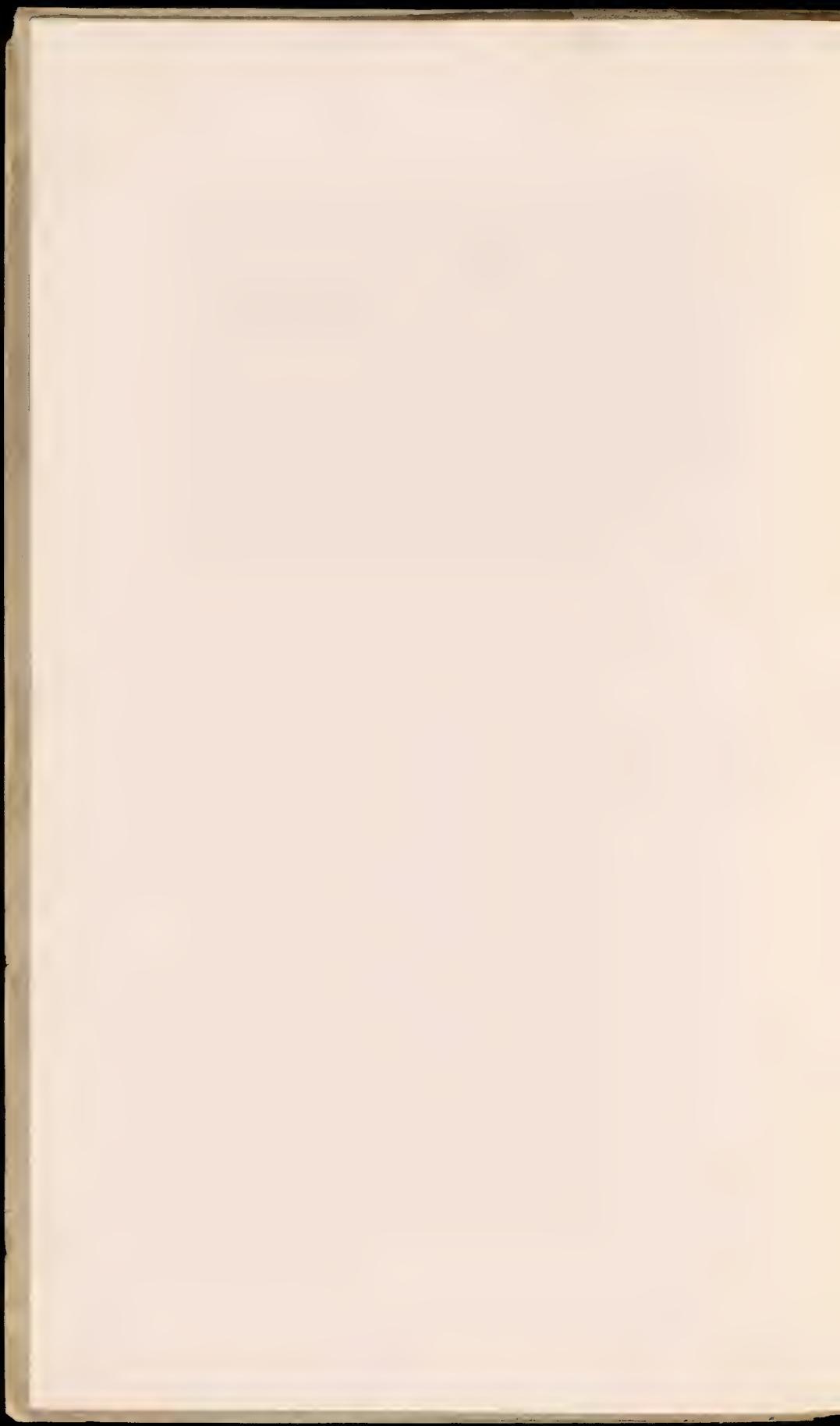




2—QUIET RIVER

A GENTLY flowing stream, its borders rich with grasses and slim trees has caught the artist's fancy here. In the distance may be seen a stretch of wooded country. The tranquility of the scene below brings out in strong contrast the turbulence of the sky above. Trailing their shadows beneath, great masses of clouds, gray and threatening, are assembled, when through a break in the center may be seen a patch of heavenly blue, brightly indicative of the proverbial lining. The sunny optimism of the picture makes a strong appeal.

Height 18, length 24 inches.





3—WOODLAND POOL

BETWEEN green clad banks in the center of the canvas a pool, gleaming like a rare jewel in a dull old setting, radiates a brilliant, greenish-blue glow, light reflected from above. Towering trees enclose it, their interlocked branches throwing the scene into intense gloom. The color values are exquisitely handled and the brushwork is bold and sure.

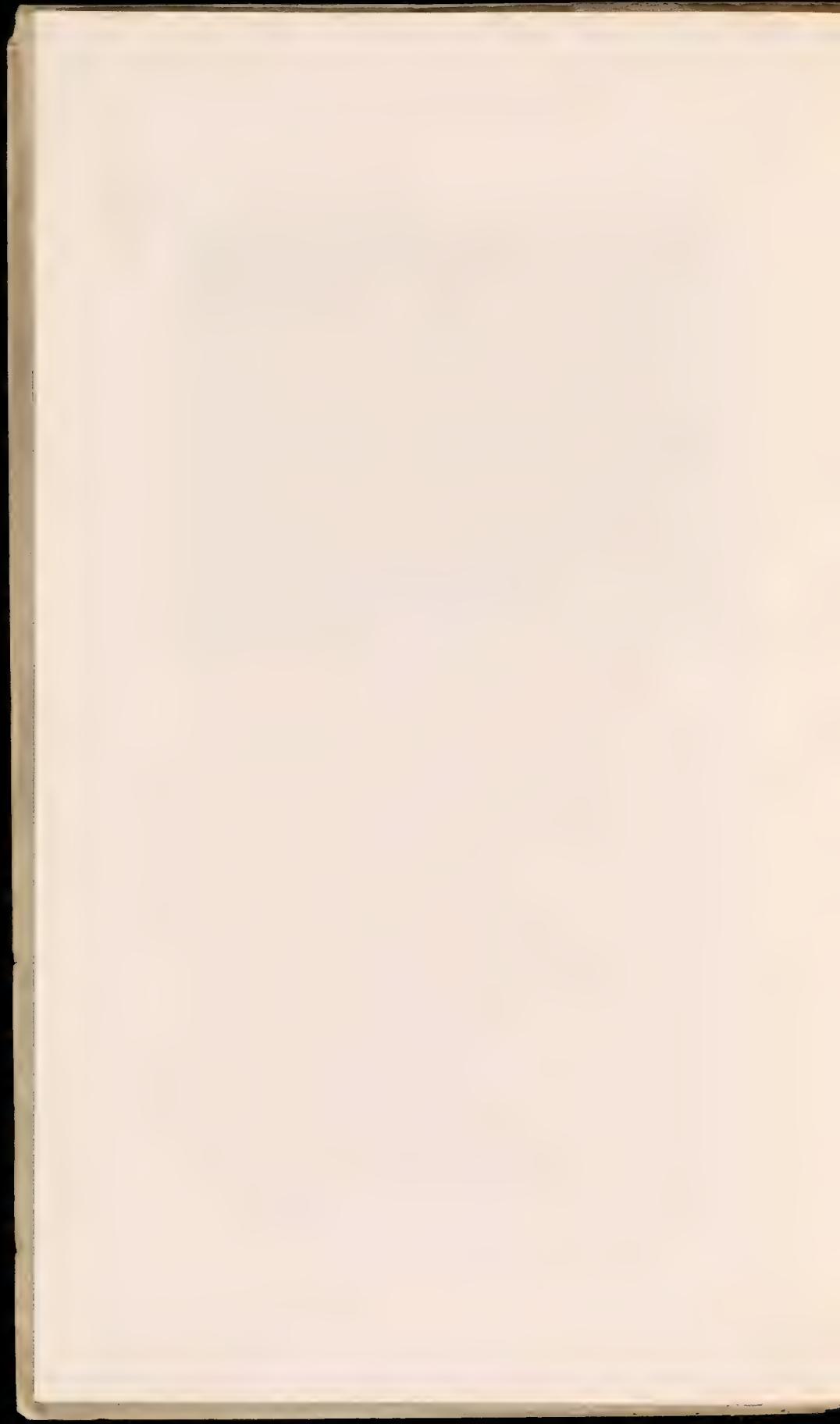
Height 20, length 30 inches.





4—THE OAKS

A COUNTRY closely carpeted with rank, soft grass sweeps back in the distance to where the last warm lights signal the sun's passing. In the foreground towers a mighty oak, beneath is a lonely figure absorbed in the approaching night. There is a droop to the shoulders, a touching wistfulness in the unconscious pose, a note of patient resignation in the bowed head, which bespeak the presence of heartache and the added pangs of memory; here rests a woman with soul keyed to all the aching loneliness of the solitudes, to whom the remote places make an irresistible appeal. Beyond the slim, scattered tree trunks to the right may be seen a thickly wooded stretch, its fastnesses already black with the shadows of night, and through the lacework of foliage above the blue-green night sky, clouds cast a lingering light on the fast darkening scene. Under the trees dusk lies thick, obscuring the details of tiny grass blades and flower faces. The nocturnal quality is handled with rare sympathy and the appeal which it made to the artist is subtly conveyed to the beholder from the miniature glade on the canvas.

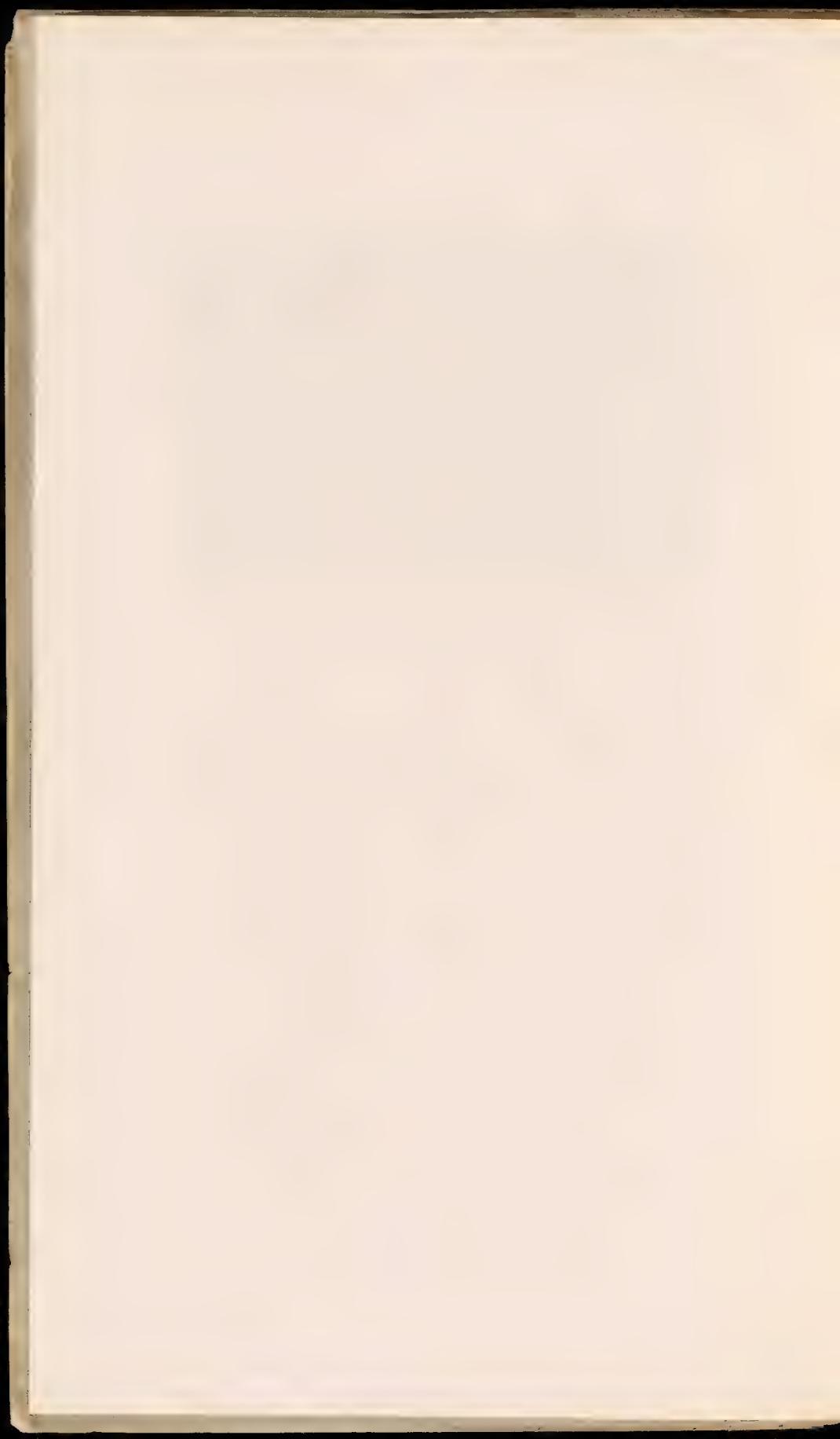




5—DAY DREAMS

THE sun in a blaze of orange glory, its golden splendor lighting the scene beneath. At the foot of a spreading tree a group of figures, in silent communion, watch the brilliant passing, their senses held in thrall by the sheer beauty and solemnity of the picture. A quiet, peaceful stream spans the landscape, its placid bosom warm with a thousand fleetly changing reflections. To the left its banks lies clothed in the soft sun-kissed grass of summer, from the midst of which rise two splendid oaks. The romantic quality that pervades this canvas makes the picture one which grows on the beholder with each acquaintance.

Height 20, length 30 inches.





6—THE END OF DAY

A SYMPHONY in the rich russets and browns of autumn. Deep in the heart of the woods, warm with the tones of autumn, the darkness comes on apace. From the sky beyond, just a glow of gold, blending into the night's blue, gives the last faint light to the dense brown gloom. In the foreground two giant oaks stand and to the left a pool reflects the last golden glow. The scene is close with mystery of the coming night.

Height 20, length 30 inches.

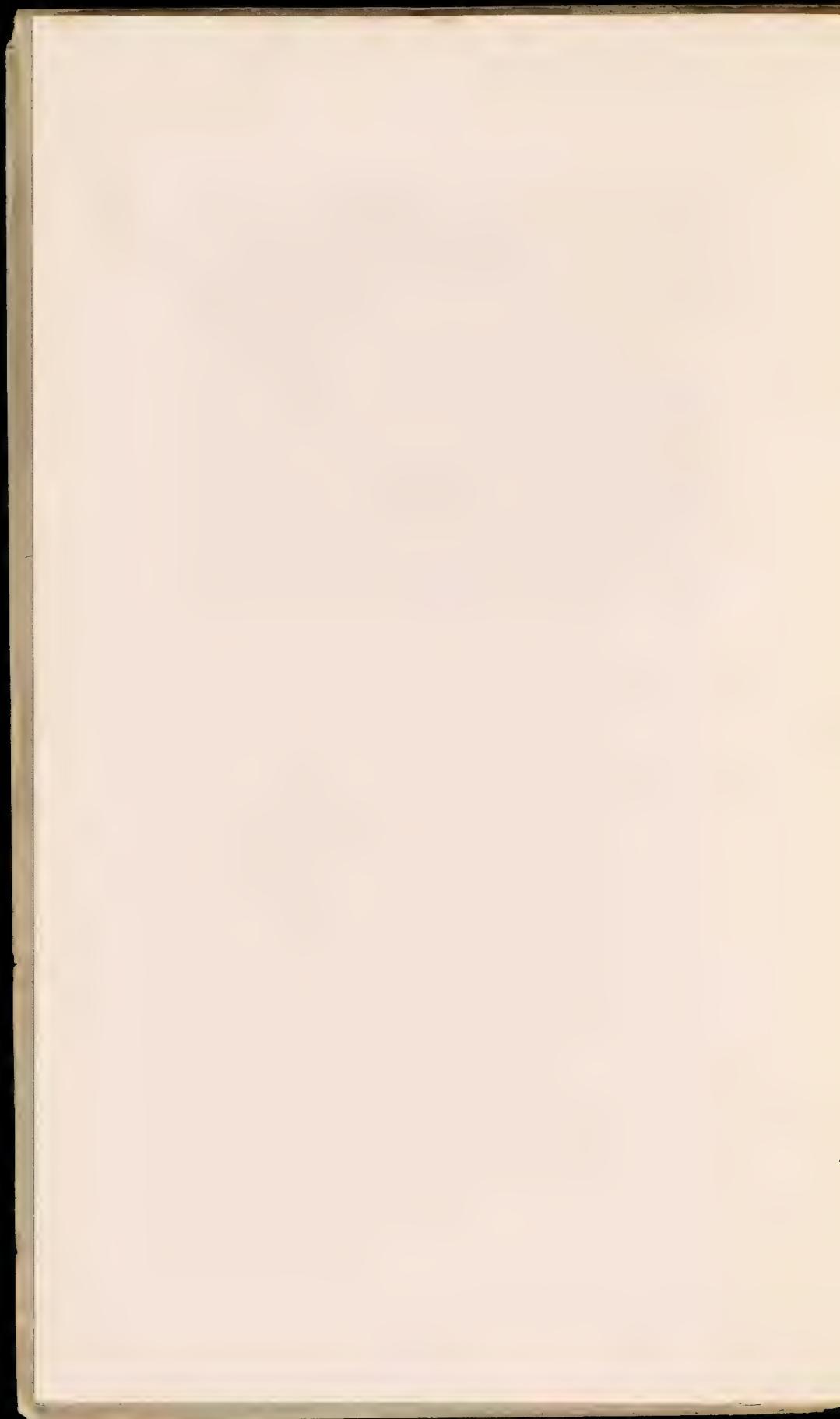




7—PEACEFUL DAY

SET in the midst of a quiet dell is a little woodland pool, its transparent waters reflecting the graceful grasses which hem it in. Overhead, downy cirrus clouds float drowsily over the brilliant sky, their errant passage marked in the mirror-like lake beneath. Contented cattle browse in the shade of the slim, tapering trees or seek the coolness of the water. The scene is truly Californian and incomparable in the beauty of its theme and expression.

Height 17, length 23 inches.

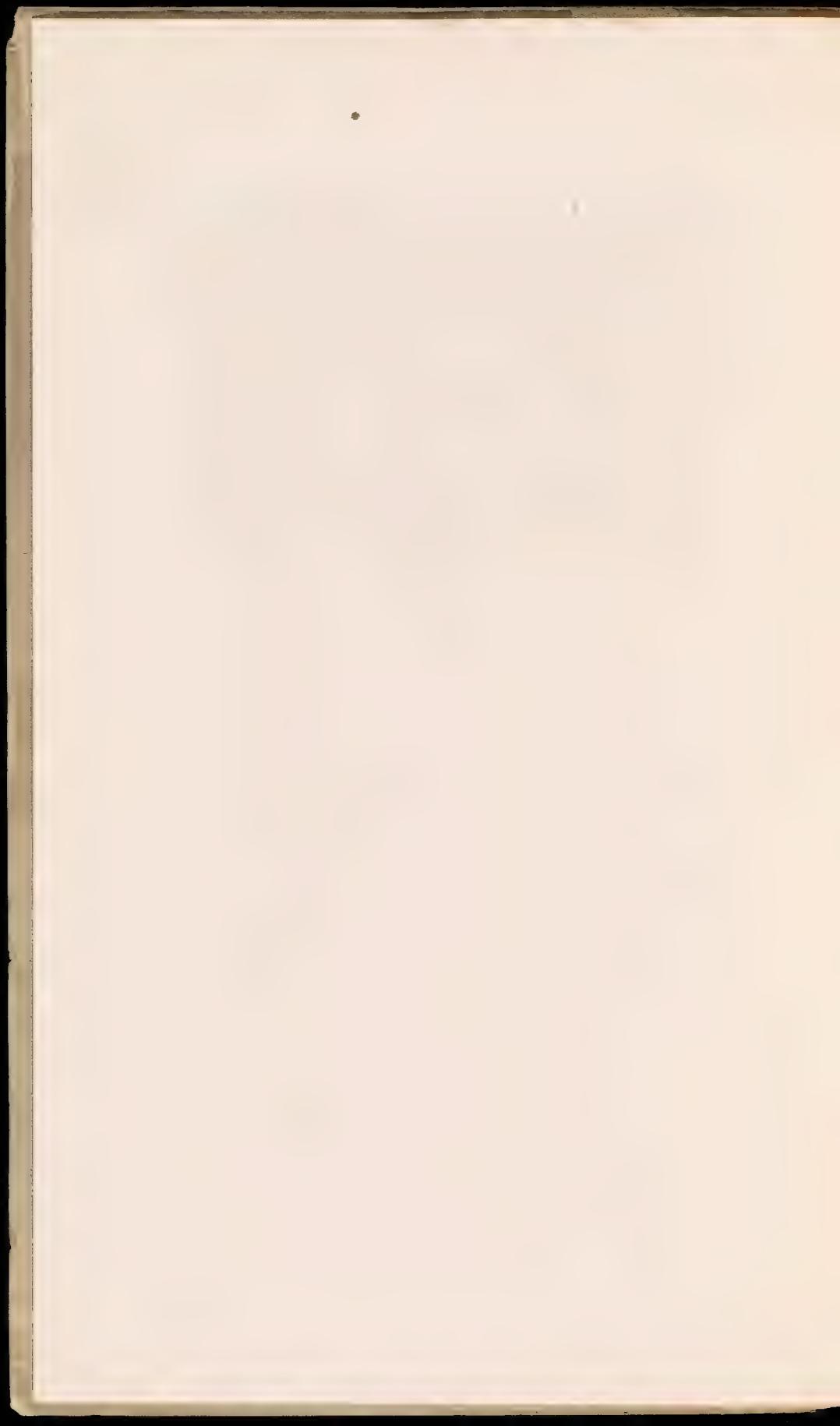




8—GOLDEN HERITAGE

MIDSUMMER, cloaked in its golds and browns, lured the artist to inspiration in this painting. In the midst of a grove of great-limbed trees a shallow stream wanders aimlessly away into the distance. Rough, yellowish grass, tinged with green where the shade is deepest, carpets the grove, and through a break in the foliage may be seen the faraway mountains. An atmosphere of lazy warmth pervades the scene, to which the drowsy cows at the waterside add a harmonious note. Through the trees may be glimpsed a sky of incomparable blue, its surface swept by billowing clouds.

Height 40, length 60 inches.

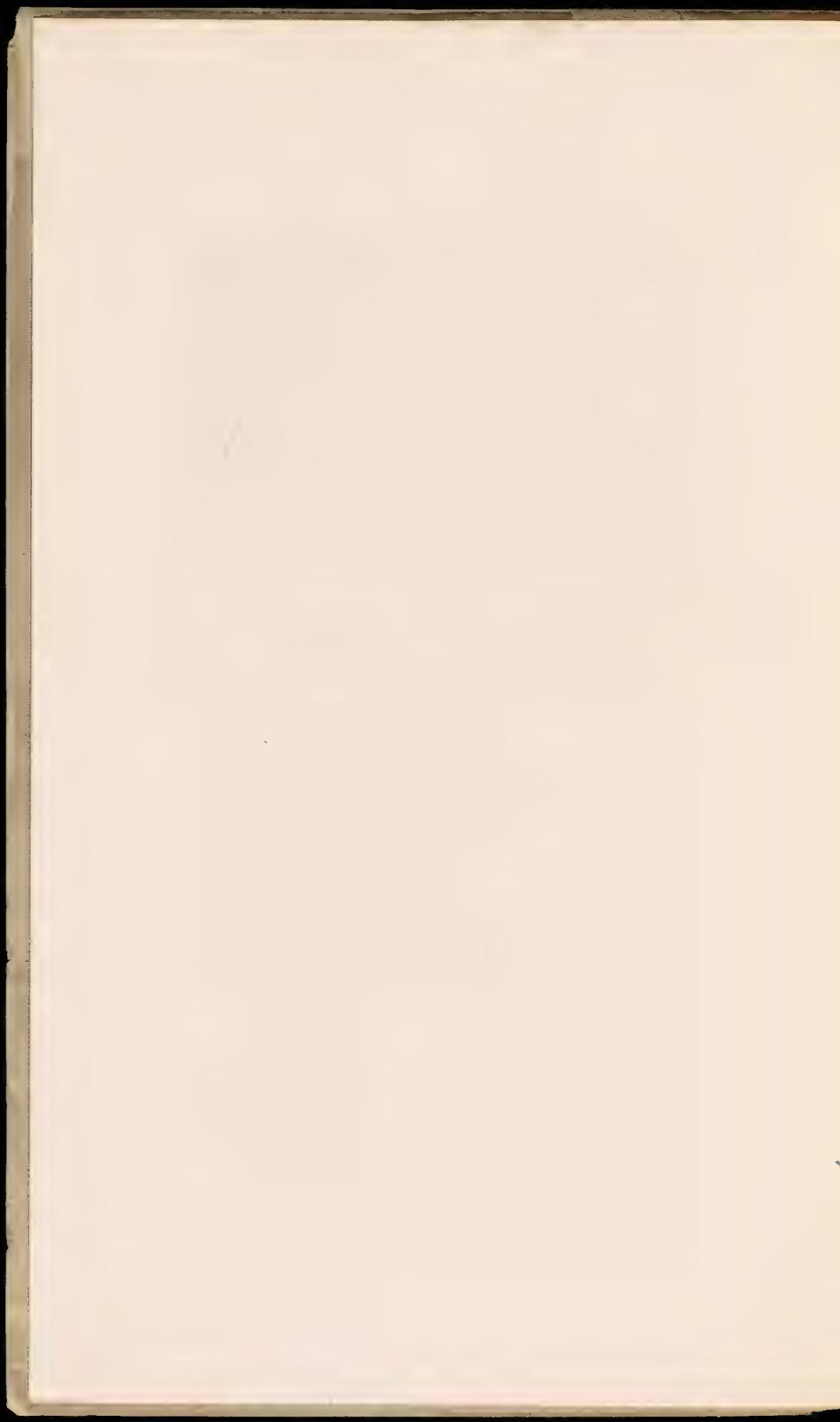


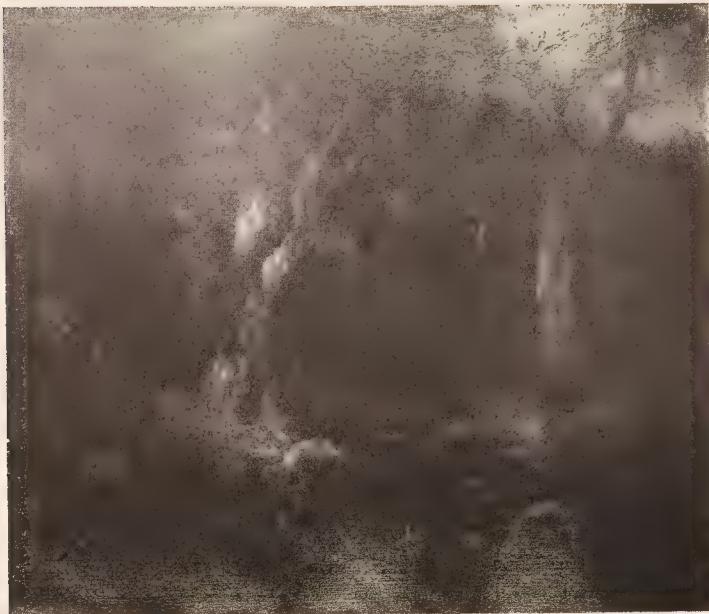


9—SUNNY CALIFORNIA

THE soft, warm heat of a midsummer day throbs through this canvas. An open space, overgrown with lush grass and bordered by noble trees. A ribbon-like stream, its surface animated with mirrored light and shade. By the side of the stream drowsy cattle are grazing in bucolic contentment, and to the left a stately tree stands sharply defined against a deep wood. Grey clouds float near the horizon, and in the background may be seen a cottage snuggling in the wooded country, its boundaries melting into the hazy distance.

Height 16, length 24 inches.



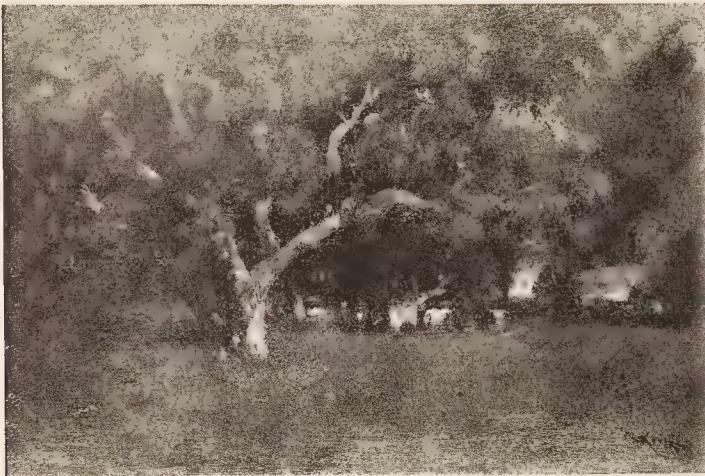


10—THE BROOK

KETH and sentiment were inseparable. In the enchanting make-believe of paints and brushes he reveled in every romantic phase of Nature, and, above all, he loved the mystic time of the twilight and the gloaming. In this scene he has caught the glamorous charm of the hour and set it down with irresistible appeal. Great, hoary trees weave a canopy of interlaced branches overhead through which a vaguely grayish sky may be discerned. Here in the embrace of the mountains a little rivulet flows quietly on its way. The painting is strong in its appeal to the lover of Nature and carries the irresistible lure of the open.

Height 22, length 25 inches.

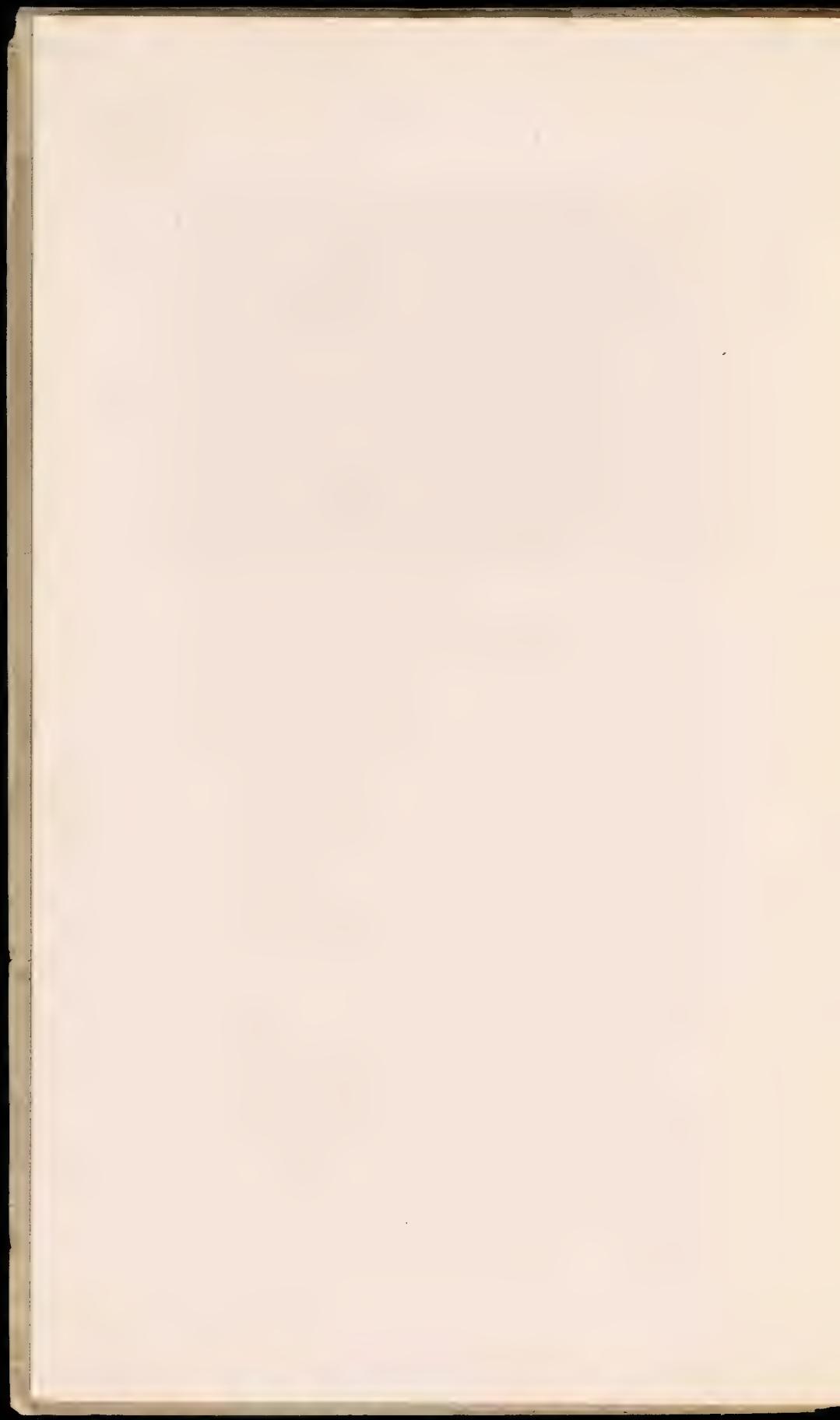




11—BENEATH THE OAKS

CATTLE grazing in the virginal stillness of this splendid grove of oaks. On all sides the mighty giants raise their stately heads against the darkening heavens, and under foot the rank, sweet grass is almost lost in the shadows of gathering dusk, while one giant oak more ambitious than the rest, rears its graceful head, plume-like, against the heavens. A subdued hush broods over the scene which is painted in deep, rich tones of green, and the canvas is permeated with the haunting lure of twilight.

Height 18. length 26 inches.

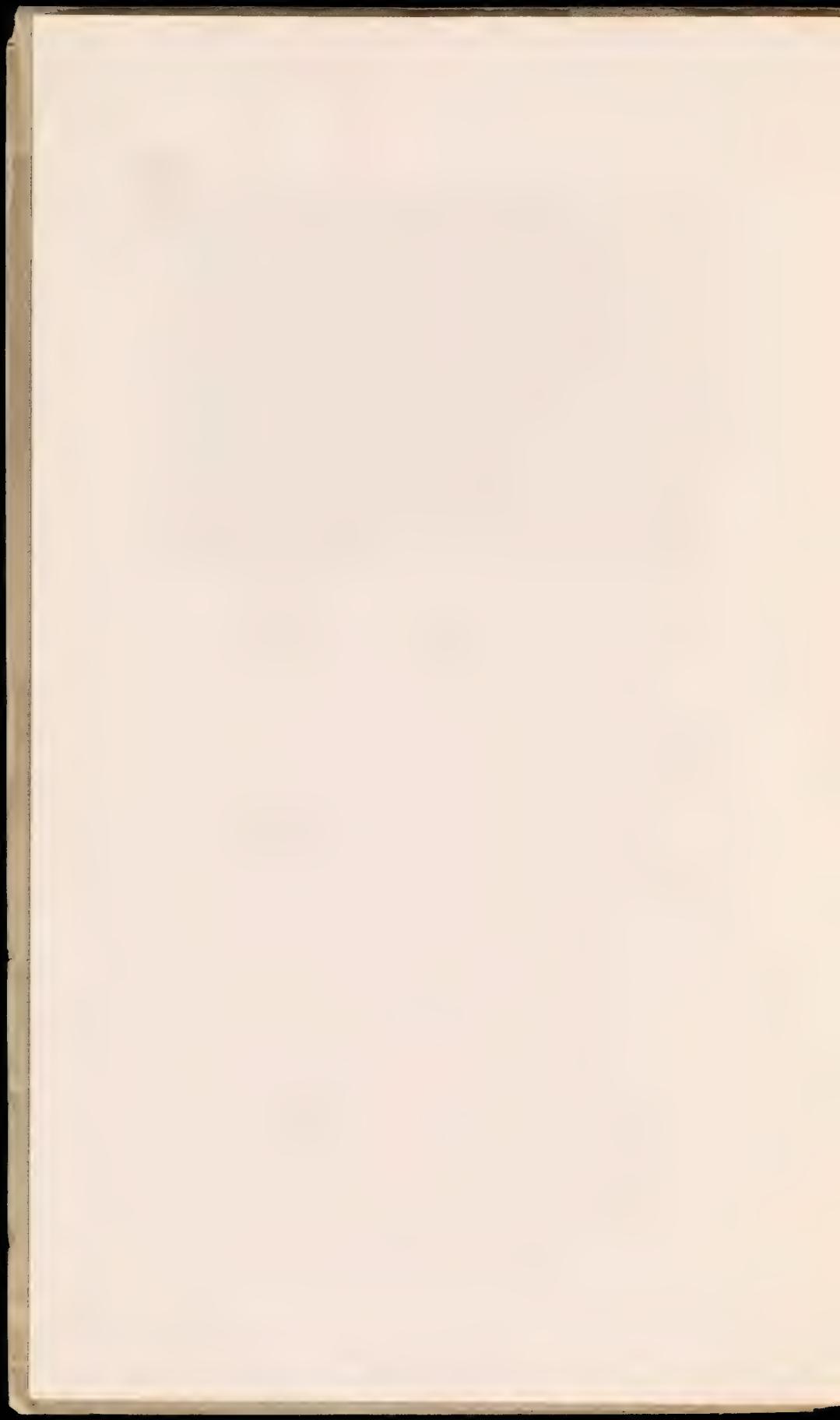




12—DREAMY DAY

PILED up masses of gray clouds entirely overcast the sunset sky, their edges touched to a shimmering radiance by the hidden orb. Through the center of the picture a gentle river winds its way between banks of deep green grass and thickly crowding trees. In the middle distance a group of cows may be seen crossing the stream. The canvas in its cool greens and grays is fresh and moist with the promise of rain, and one senses the hushed expectancy with which earth and trees and sky await the breaking of the storm.

Height 16, length 24 inches.

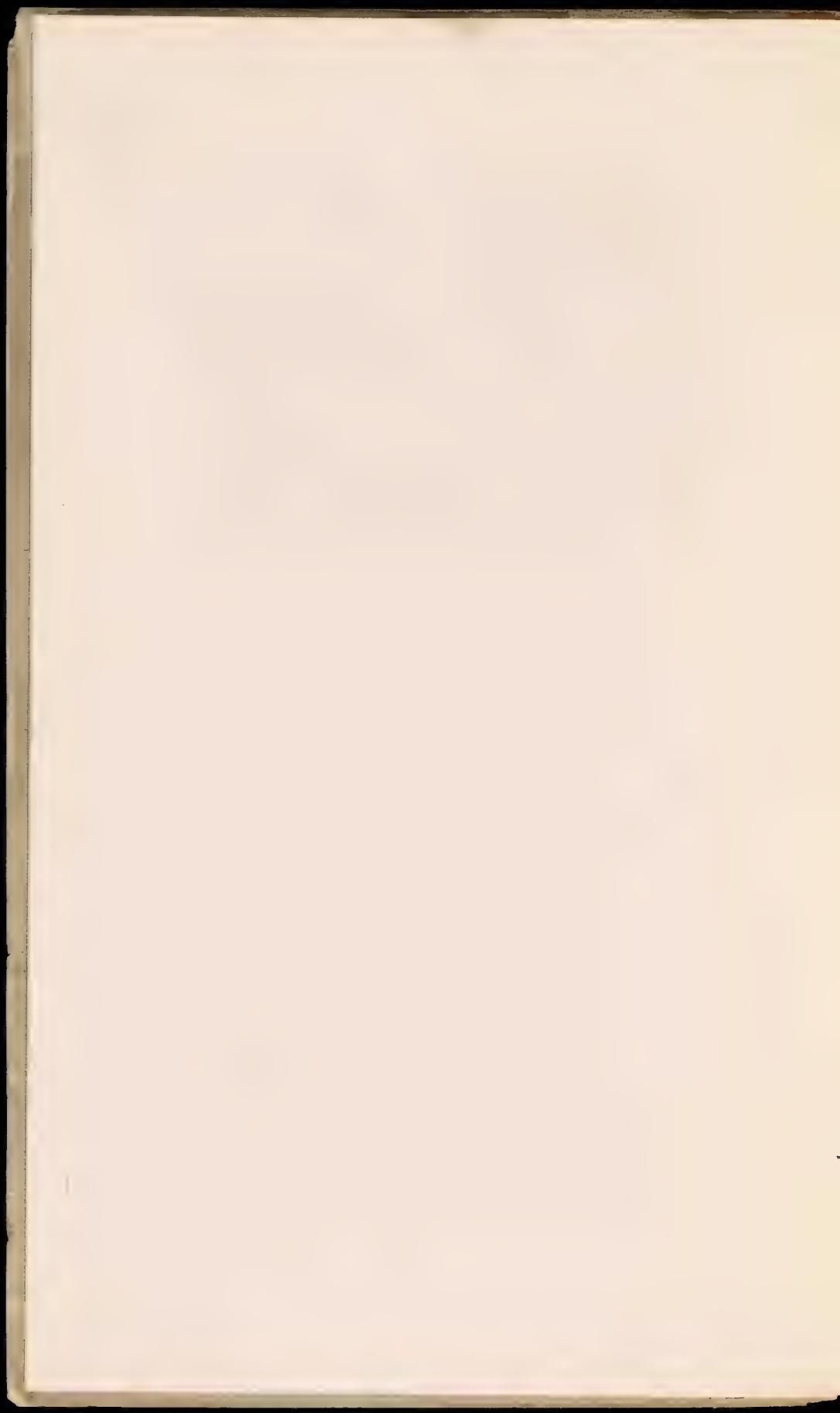




13—RUSSIAN RIVER

A PEACEFUL valley, quick with the first flush of spring, lies shimmering in the soft sunlight, its breadth spanned by the limpid waters of a tranquil river. Two figures wander on the hillside, while deep in its cooling depths the cattle stand. The canvas is sweet and fragrant with the breath of early spring.

175 Height 16, length 24 inches.



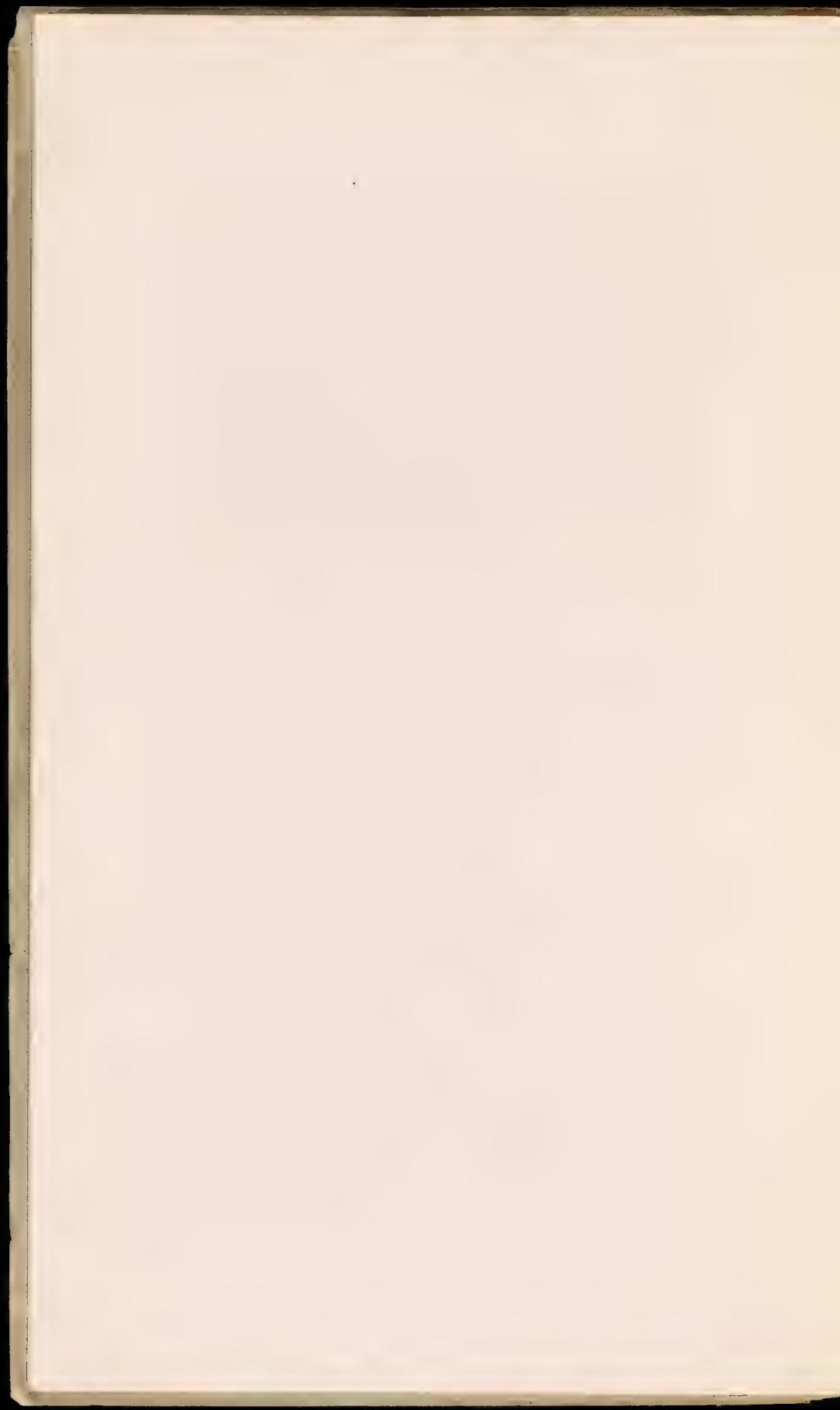


14—MIDSUMMER DAY

HARMONY is the keynote of this exquisite canvas.

Trees and grasses have been touched by the first visitation of California summer and leaves and blades in their soft yellow garb blend in perfect accord with the pale blue light. In the wake of a little path which runs through the center of the picture, loiter a group of figures. The foreground is rich in swaying grasses and wild flowers. The scene is permeated with the soft, palpitating warmth of a midsummer day, one of those perfect California days, plucked from its setting and transplanted to the canvas ere its beauty had time to droop.

Height 16, length 24 inches.





15—APRIL SHOWERS

SUNLIGHT and shadow play a pretty game of hide and seek on this canvas. A fertile, fruitful valley, pregnant with the coming of spring, lies bathed in the fickle April sunshine. To the left is a clump of leafy trees and rough, weather-stained boulders, to the right a rolling hillside, its crest lost in a mantle of menacing gray clouds. In this painting Keith has shown himself the master of cloud effects. Great masses and banks of cloud overhang the entire sky, save in one spot where the soft folds have been rent apart. Through this ragged aperture the errant sunlight spills, drenching the jagged edges of the storm clouds in a silver sheen and the land below in the sheer joy and gladness of spring. There is a fleeting, evanescent charm to this picture, a lure to the imagination. It brings a bit of a smile and a promise of tears, and the irresistible call of spring.

14.10 Height 30, length 40 inches.

